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"The Federal Role in America's Infrastructure"
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Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this kick-off hearing on the Federal role in transportation and infrastructure investment.

Throughout our Nation's history, the Federal Government has played a vital and inextricable role in the development of our infrastructure and the various transportation modes it supports.

Our Founding Fathers enshrined a Federal role for transportation in the U.S. Constitution, and the leaders that followed made the hard choices to build the Transcontinental Railroad and the Interstate Highway System. Together, these investments connected our Nation from sea to shining sea and paved the way for a new age of American opportunity and prosperity.

Today, infrastructure investment remains an essential component of our economic competitiveness and ability to create desperately needed good-paying jobs.

Despite the critical role that the Federal Government has played in the development of infrastructure for generations, it now faces an uncertain future. The hard choices of the past have given way to a political will that never sees beyond the next election.

It is time to recognize that Congress must again make hard choices. We must move beyond rhetoric in support of infrastructure and recognize that it is about the money. Will we find the necessary resources to increase investment in infrastructure and ensure that we leave our Nation better off for the next generation?

It begins with budget sequestration, which will hit the Federal Budget in just seven legislative days. If Congress allows the sequester to go into effect, this self-inflicted wound will cut infrastructure investment and thousands of good-paying jobs. The sequester will cut about \$1 billion from the U.S. Department of Transportation, \$600 million from the Army Corps of Engineers, and \$4 billion total from transportation and infrastructure programs in FY 2013 alone.

But the sequester's impact on our transportation infrastructure would be minimal compared to some of the budget proposals that we have recently seen put forward in Congress.

Budget Committee Chairman Ryan has indicated that this year's Budget Resolution will require a balanced budget within 10 years. A balanced budget is certainly a laudable goal, but if the budgetary priorities chosen to balance the budget in 10 years closely mirror those that Chairman Ryan selected when he proposed to



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st Congress, the Federal Government will go from
ture investment to just being one of the extras.

Rather than cutting Federal investment, we need to be doing more, much more in my opinion, to help rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and put America back to work.

One way we can do that is by making sure that that our Federal investments in highways, bridges, public transit and passenger rail systems, airport projects, and water infrastructure projects are crafted with American workmanship and support good-paying American jobs.

I will soon be introducing legislation . and I invite Members from both sides of the aisle to join me and cosponsor the bill . that ensures that our transportation and infrastructure investments will be stamped ~~%Made in America+~~ By closing critical loopholes in our Buy America laws, we can ensure that these investments, financed by U.S. taxpayers, will be used to create and sustain good-paying jobs in our local communities . not outsourced overseas.

I look forward to hearing from today's witnesses about additional steps we can take to finance infrastructure investments to support jobs and economic growth, and I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, to find the necessary resources to increase investment in infrastructure and ensure that we leave our Nation better off for the next generation.